News Release
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Ministry of Health and Long-Term Care

Ministère de la Santé et des Soins de longue durée

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MCGUINTY GOVERNMENT OFFERS FULL-TIME JOB OPPORTUNITY FOR EVERY ONTARIO NURSING GRADUATE

Up To 4,000 New Nurses Being Hired To Increase Access To Quality Care

TORONTO –The McGuinty government is investing $89 million to guarantee that up to 4,000 new nursing graduates in Ontario will have the opportunity for a full-time job this year, Health and Long-Term Care Minister George Smitherman announced today.

"We're delivering on our promise that every nursing graduate who wants to work in Ontario will be offered the opportunity for full-time employment," said Smitherman. "We want to take full advantage of the skills our nurses offer. By working together with employers to implement our Nursing Graduate Guarantee program and bring newly graduated nurses into their workforce, we continue to increase patient access to quality health care and keep skilled nurses working in Ontario."

Beginning this spring, the 4,000 nursing students expected to graduate will have the opportunity for a full-time job in the health care field – which includes the hospital, long-term care, home care, mental health, public health and primary health care sectors.

The province will pay for the first six months of employment while the employer will be responsible for six weeks of funding. This will provide the new graduate with a window of 7.5 months to transition into a permanent full-time job while gaining valuable full-time clinical experience.

This investment will also benefit other front-line nurses. This initiative includes a minimum three month period of orientation, and if after this time employers are able to transition nursing graduates into permanent jobs, then they will have the opportunity to use the remaining government funds for other frontline nursing priorities.

New graduates will use an online employment portal on the website, www.healthforceontario.ca, to apply for full-time job offers from employers.

"This is superb news," said Mary Ferguson-Paré, president of the Registered Nurses' Association of Ontario (RNAO). "We must keep our nurses here in Ontario and this commitment goes a long way towards ensuring that."

"Registered Practical Nurses (RPNs) have struggled to find full time employment and new graduate RPNs have been particularly affected by the lack of full time employment with only a very small percentage achieving full time status during the first years of employment," said Dianne Martin, Executive Director of the Registered Practical Nurses Association of Ontario. "This initiative will remove a great deal of the uncertainty that is part of the outlook of each graduating class and should translate into greater retention of nurses in the profession and less loss to other jurisdictions."

"By working together, the government and health care sector employers will be able to demonstrate leadership in retaining skilled nurses to work in Ontario to deliver quality care," said Lawrence Bloomberg, Board Chair of Mt. Sinai Hospital.

Today's announcement is part of the province's health human resources strategy, *HealthForceOntario*, which is ensuring Ontario has the right supply and mix of health care professionals.

The McGuinty government has launched several initiatives designed to ensure that Ontario families continue to receive quality nursing care. These include:

- Creating 5,453 new nursing jobs to date in Ontario
- Enhancing work environments for nurses through more educational and professional career opportunities
- Keeping late career nurses in the profession while utilizing their knowledge, skills and experience to benefit the health care system
- Purchasing modern hospital equipment – such as patient lifts, electric beds and safety alarms – to improve patient safety and working conditions for nurses.

Today's initiative is part of the McGuinty government's plan for innovation in public health care, building a system that delivers on three priorities – keeping Ontarians healthy, reducing wait times and providing better access to doctors and nurses.

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